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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED ON THE NATIONAL FAST DAY, JUNE 1, 1865.

BY THOMAS WORCESTER.

11

“JESUS saw Nathaniel coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathaniel saith unto Him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathaniel answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Five years ago, when Abraham Lincoln was chosen President of the United States, he might well have shrunk back in astonishment; and, from what we have since known of him, we may believe that he did shrink back, and say within himself, How do they know me? and how can they suppose that I have the proper qualifications for that high office? It is true that they did not know him, or know that he had those qualifications. But there was One among them who did know; One who had been with them from the beginning, and who had led and guided them hitherto. This same One had been with him

from the beginning, and needed not that any should testify concerning him, because He knew what was in him. And from what we all know now, we feel assured that this One could say unto him, Whilst thou wast in obscurity, I knew thee. Before others knew thee, I knew thee. It is true that thou hast not the qualifications for that office, which are desirable in ordinary times. But those qualifications would be impediments now, for a new work is to be done; a work that no human wisdom or power can do. I know thee to be an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. I know that thou wilt look up unto me, and suffer me to lead thee, and that thou wilt be honest and faithful to thy duty. Thou art the man whom I now desire to be in that office; go forward, enter into it, and I will be with thee. Thou canst not see beforehand what thou art to do, but information will be given thee when it is needed.

In these days the Lord does not speak unto men with an audible voice, for He has already uttered His Word, and He now explains it, fills it with His Spirit, and thus enables those who are willing to be led by Him, to understand Him.

In the history of creation we learn that men were created in the image and likeness of God; and in the explanation of Scripture which the Lord now gives, at His second coming, we learn that there is an influx of Love and Wisdom from Him, as of heat and light from the sun: for in Him is Infinite Love; and the nature of this love is such, that He desires to give unto others the things which are His own; to give not only the outward worldly things which He has created, and which are therefore His, but the internal things,—the Love and Wisdom from which He created the outward things. From this love of communicating His Love and Wisdom, He produces men to receive them. And as men are recipients of the things which are in Him, they are in His image and likeness; and they have a desire to communicate unto others the things which are in themselves.

But there are various kinds of good things. There are some things which our natural loves regard as good, because they are good for the body, and contribute to our worldly happi-

ness ; and there are other things which spiritual loves regard as good, because they are good for the soul, in its relation to the Lord and heaven. All kinds are from the Lord, and He desires that we should receive them all ; but He regards natural things as subordinate to spiritual, and He desires us to regard them so. But while men are in a natural state of mind, they receive and appreciate merely natural things. They desire chiefly things which they regard as good for themselves ; but they also do good to others, for the sake of themselves. But spiritual men regard spiritual things as most important. They are disposed to do and to communicate both spiritual and natural good to their neighbors ; but as they value the spiritual for its own sake, and value the natural for the sake of the spiritual, they of course desire their neighbors to do the same.

But all kinds of good are from the Lord ; and while men are doing them, they are acting from the Lord, whether they are sensible of it or not, and they may therefore be regarded as representatives of Him. It is natural to think of them as acting of themselves ; but this is a very superficial, sensual, and incorrect way of thinking of them ; for they never act of themselves, and it is impossible for them to do so. When they do evil, they act under the influence of evil spirits ; but when they do good, they are under the influence of good spirits and of the Lord.

When we regard all good men as acting from the Lord, our knowledge of Him is continually increasing ; for all the varieties of goodness that we see in them, are from Him ; and when we see their good works, we glorify their Father, who is in the heavens ; that is, we love Him more, and believe in Him more.

One of the greatest blessings that a people can enjoy, is that of having rulers who are in the image and likeness of the Lord : not only because they are for that reason better rulers, but because their example and influence have a tendency to bring all the people into the same image. This blessing we have enjoyed for four years, in our chief magistrate.

The great attributes of the Lord are His Love and His Wis-

dom. His Love is the love of doing good, and communicating good unto men; and His Wisdom is the wisdom of that Love. It is the Wisdom by which He does and communicates good unto men. In our President we saw an image of these attributes. It was very manifest that His ruling love was love towards others. No one who was acquainted with him imagined that he was governed by a love of dominion, a love of popularity or fame, or of wealth; but all could see that he appeared to be filled with kindness and love towards others. One of the strongest evidences of the purity of any one's love is, that he does not love merely those who love him, and that he does not hate those who hate, and is not angry and revengeful towards those who revile and injure him. These are test questions, which are given us by the Lord Himself, that we may try our feelings by them, and ascertain whether they are from Him, and therefore like His, or from an opposite quarter. Will not Mr. Lincoln's feelings bear this examination? Did he love merely those who loved him, or did he love the whole country, and thus love those who hated him? Did he manifest hatred, anger, and revenge toward those who manifested those feelings towards him? or was he merciful, forgiving, and, in a measure, like unto our heavenly Father,—good unto all, even to the unthankful and the evil? What do our memories testify? What has been his conduct for four years past? It is all before you. No life was ever more public; no character was ever more transparent. Some of you have seen him and conversed with him. All of us have read his inaugurals, his messages, his speeches, his conversations, and his letters. Of all these things we are witnesses; and what do we testify? Has there been any man on this earth, who, upon being ill-treated as he has been, has manifested less anger, hatred, and vindictiveness, or more forgiveness and good-will, than Mr. Lincoln has? Is he not, then, a remarkable image of the Lord as to his noblest attribute, His Divine Love?

And then as to wisdom. The Divine Wisdom is that by which the Lord does good unto angels and men. Mr. Lincoln

had obtained some knowledge of this Wisdom, and he had great respect for it. He was a humble man, and was willing to receive assistance from his fellow-men; but he had a work to do, which neither he nor they knew how to do. He therefore became more sensible of the need of looking to the Lord, and of being led by His Providence, than he ever was before. He also saw, that if he would be led by the Lord, he must conform to the Divine Laws; and he believed that if he did so, the Lord would lead him through the great work which was before him. He saw that he must do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God. He constantly had it in his mind, that the Lord teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to do unto them as we would have them do unto us. These precepts he regarded as the principles of true wisdom; and these principles he was disposed to follow, as far as the Constitution and laws of his country would allow. Here he met with great difficulty in carrying out the Divine principles by which he wished to be guided; for our Constitution and laws were not, in all respects, founded on those principles. Slavery was in our country at the time when our Constitution was formed; and in forming it, the Divine principles which have been referred to were set aside, so as to allow of the existence of that institution. Consequently, the Constitution did not allow the government to meddle with slavery in ordinary times, and when it was used for ordinary purposes.

But slavery, being in its very essence and nature aggressive, brought on rebellion and war. And during rebellion and war, the Constitution gives extraordinary powers to the President. It puts all the forces of the country into his hands, and requires him to use them. It requires him to carry on the war, and to put down the rebellion, by all means that are lawful and expedient; and one of the proper means of carrying on war is, to deprive the enemies of the means by which they carry it on. Now it so happened in our case, that our enemies were slave-holders, and that their slaves were an important means of carrying on the war against us. Consequently, the Constitution required the President to deprive them of their slaves, if

he regarded that as the best means of opposing them. He did so regard it, and he did act in that manner.

Now let us look upon the result at which we have arrived. The Constitution of the United States, which is by many almost worshipped as the perfection of political wisdom, has, in order to save its own life, been obliged to bow to the simple principles of Divine justice, which are revealed in the Word of God ; and has been obliged to cast out of itself the base, incongruous, and unjust elements that entered into it from beneath. There was a conflict between our Constitution and Divine justice. This conflict was carried on over the whole country, but especially in the mind of the President ; because in him the two things met ; because he felt bound to conform to them both ; and because he was, therefore, bound to reconcile them, if he possibly could. And we have been allowed to see the process by which the work was done ; for he was so honest, so ingenuous, so transparent, he was as if his whole outer man were made of glass ; we could plainly see the operations of his inner man. How often have we heard him say, " I am as much opposed to slavery as any of you ; and if it depended upon me as a man, it would soon come to an end : but I am the President of the United States ; I have taken an oath to support the Constitution ; I could not have entered on that office without taking that oath ; I must not, therefore, use the powers of that office as a means of carrying out my private sentiments, let those sentiments be ever so good, if they are not in accordance with the Constitution." Thus for a long while did Mr. Lincoln labor, internally and externally, to overcome the rebellion, and at the same time to preserve the Constitution, with all its imperfections. But at length the Constitution itself told him that it was his duty to emancipate the slaves, as a means of putting down the rebellion, and defending the country. Then he felt at liberty to act from the good things which were treasured up in his own heart ; and he did act from them.

This conflict between the Constitution and justice was at the same time going on in the minds of many others. But there were very many who could not hold their minds in suspense,

but immediately took one side or the other. They had no conflict in their own minds, but they had it between one another. It belonged to Mr. Lincoln, on account of his high position, to see when the Constitution surrendered, and to determine when the conflict should cease. It was then his duty to bring forth the dictates of wisdom which had been suppressed, and to establish the ordinances of justice as the law of the land.

He was honest; he was faithful; he desired to be led; and while he was carefully feeling his way, we believe that the Lord did lead him. He had received from the Divine Love the love of doing good; and then from the Divine Wisdom, he received the wisdom for doing it; so that we see in him an image of both those Divine attributes. And a very great blessing it is to any people, to be able to see this in their ruler, for it has a powerful tendency to bring them into such a state as he is in.

As all good feelings and true thoughts are from Divine Love and Wisdom, and are images of them, so all good works are from Divine works, and are images of them. And as some Divine works are apparently greater and more conspicuous than others, so it is with human works. In ordinary times, when Divine works consist in creating men and preparing them for heaven, they are so much embodied in human works, that they are scarcely visible. Men may then be sensible of the internal presence and influence of the Lord, and their affairs may go on smoothly and happily. But men decline. Imperfections, shortcomings, and faults are permitted, and become common; then positive evils and falsities creep in, and all these things increase and accumulate from generation to generation; until the heavens are darkened; until the internal presence and influence of the Lord cease to be manifest; and all correct ideas of Him, and of the way to Him, are lost; then it becomes necessary that He should come down to remove these obstructions, and open the way of salvation. And with the obstructions, it is necessary that He should remove all those who obstinately adhere to them, and will not be separated from them. This is what is meant by a coming of the

Lord, and by a judgment. These works are, of course, more conspicuous, and seem to be greater than His ordinary works.

Such a work the Lord did in the spiritual world at His first coming, and the effects of it gradually came down into this world, and were manifested in the form and operations of the first Christian church. And when that church came to an end, He came again, and performed another similar work in the spiritual world; and the effects of it are coming down into the natural world, and are to appear in the form of a New Church and its operations.

When a church is declining, and coming to an end, the evil influences from hell in their operation upon men overpower the good influences from heaven, and thus deprive them of spiritual freedom. The primary effort of Divine and heavenly influences is to make men free; for the Lord and His angels love them, and desire to bestow upon them all good things whatever, both spiritual and natural.

But they know that men cannot properly receive and use any good thing whatever, unless they are free. Hence it is, that in all they do for men they have a primary regard for their freedom. On the other hand, evil spirits do not love men, do not desire to communicate any good things to them, and therefore do not desire that they should be free; but they love themselves only: they desire that men should serve them, that they should have no freedom but the freedom of serving them, and no pleasure but that of serving them.

This is the influence that men come under at the end of a church: and it is to deliver them from this bondage, and bring them into spiritual freedom, that the Lord comes down, reveals Himself and the principles of His government, executes a judgment, performs the work of redemption, and establishes a New Church.

The principal part of the work that He does at such times is in the spiritual world; for there do the sources of evil influences exist in the greatest abundance. There, too, the work is done in the shortest time: for those upon whom a judgment is to be executed are ripe, their characters are already formed;

but they are living in fantasies, deceiving themselves and one another.

When, therefore, the Lord manifests Himself to them, He manifests them to themselves, and to one another; for when goodness and truth are plainly revealed, the evil and the false can no longer be mistaken for them, but are plainly seen to be opposite to them. So, when the Lord reveals Himself, good spirits, who have been in obscurity on account of the influence of evil spirits upon them, then come forth, draw near unto Him, and are raised up into heaven; but evil spirits flee away to their own abodes in outer darkness.

In this world the effects of the Lord's coming are in some respects similar, but in others different. A sudden manifestation of the Lord causes a judgment, in which the righteous are raised up into heaven, and the wicked sink down into hell. To those who are in the spiritual world, and whose characters are already formed, this is not injurious. To the righteous it is a great blessing, and to the wicked it is as great a blessing as they are prepared to receive.

But to people in this world, whose characters are not formed, the effect of a sudden manifestation would be injurious; for under so great a light they could not be reformed and regenerated in freedom, and therefore not at all. Therefore in this world the Lord reveals Himself slowly and gradually. To those who are opposed to Him He does not make His presence, or even His existence manifest. But to those who are willing to receive Him, He reveals Himself obscurely at first, and afterwards more clearly, as they become able to receive and rejoice in His light.

In the literal sense of the Scriptures there is but little revealed concerning these general judgments, but in the spiritual sense there is much. In the spiritual sense of the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage and servitude in Egypt, of their travels in the wilderness, and of their introduction into the Promised Land, we have a description of the judgment which the Lord performed when He came the first time; and in the spiritual sense of the Apocalypse we have a description of the

work which He performed at His second coming. The effects of that work may be seen in the great changes in all forms of religion, and in the great improvements which have been made during the last hundred years; and particularly what has been done towards the abolition of slavery, and the increase of freedom among men.

In this work Mr. Lincoln has been very conspicuous. As the Lord has been delivering men from spiritual slavery, so Mr. Lincoln, acting from Him, and from and according to His principles, has been delivering men from natural slavery, and at the same time overcoming the slaveholders. Neither of these works had he any thought of doing when he entered upon his office. As to liberating the slaves, he did not imagine that he had any right to do it; and as to attacking their masters, he had no disposition to do it. He merely intended to perform the duties of his office, and to have nothing to do with slavery, except to prevent its extension. But the slaveholders attacked him, and endeavored to destroy his government. This made it necessary for him to defend himself; and for this purpose he regarded it as right and expedient to liberate the slaves, for without their services at home their masters would not be able to make war. So here, as in all conflicts between good and evil, evil made the attack, and good only defended itself, and thus evil brought on its own destruction.

But Mr. Lincoln's course was suddenly brought to an end in a most unexpected manner. It was unexpected to us who knew him, for how should we be led to think that any one would desire to kill him who loved every body, and hated nobody.

In the war which had been going on, every one knew, or might have known, that he acted from ill-will to no one, and that he was only performing the duties of his office in defending his country. And, besides, the war was virtually at an end, and nothing more was to be expected from him that even the rebels would regard as evil.

As soon as the murder was committed, it was seen that the agent was a person who was wholly insignificant in himself,

and who had previously attracted notice only by assuming the character of others, and bringing forth their feelings and thoughts as if they were his own. And it has since been discovered that in performing this deed he was acting a part that had been assigned to him by others. How many of them there may have been, and what may have been the degrees of their guilt, as manifested by visible signs and acts, it is not for us, but for others, to ascertain.

As spiritual men, however, it is our duty to look into the spirit of the whole affair. In the New Church we know that there is a spiritual influence flowing from one to another, which sometimes makes a whole community feel, think, and act as one man. This has been so to a remarkable degree in the Southern States. The cause is manifest: they have all been interested in the support of one institution: and unfortunately it happens that that institution is an evil one; that it is an institution that originates in the love of dominion grounded in selfishness, and that in all its operations cherishes that love. They of course hated their free neighbors; for their very existence—even if they said nothing—would have been to them a perpetual reproach and condemnation. And while they depended for subsistence upon the labors of those whom they despised, they of course held in utter contempt those who depended upon their own labors. But as their feelings had such an evil origin, and were so evil in themselves, they were constantly under a kind of necessity to cover them up with falsities; for it would not do for them to say that they hated and despised their neighbors, because they were honest people, who did not compel others to work for them, but worked for themselves and one another. This was exactly what they did not wish to have thought and said; therefore they felt obliged to say other things, which were not true. And when their long-continued hatred finally brought on war, they gave false reasons for it, and pretended that their neighbors made war upon them, and filled the whole atmosphere with lies. This was not done by the common people of the South, but by the lead-

ers of the rebellion. The common people only believed the lies.

When, by General Sherman's march through South Carolina, Ex-Governor Aikin was brought out of the darkness of the rebellion into the light of the Union, he said that he then for the first time had an opportunity to see President Lincoln's first Inaugural Address, which was delivered four years before—thus before the war began: and he said, that if the people of the Southern States had seen that Address, they would not have consented to the war, and the rebellion would have come to an end. But it did not suit the purposes of the leaders that the people should see that Address. This is only one example out of thousands: for it was a constant and universal effort of the leaders of the rebellion, to withhold the truth from the people, and to make them believe what was false.

When, therefore, we look at this murder in spiritual light, we see that the guilt of it is not confined to those who took an active part in it, but that it extends to all who hated Mr. Lincoln, and hated the people of the free States, who put him into office;—to all who from that hatred rejected the truth concerning him and them: and to all who from hatred were led to love, to believe, and to propagate lies concerning him and them. This mass of hatred and lies was the cause of that murder; and all who participated in the hatred and lies, participated in the murder.

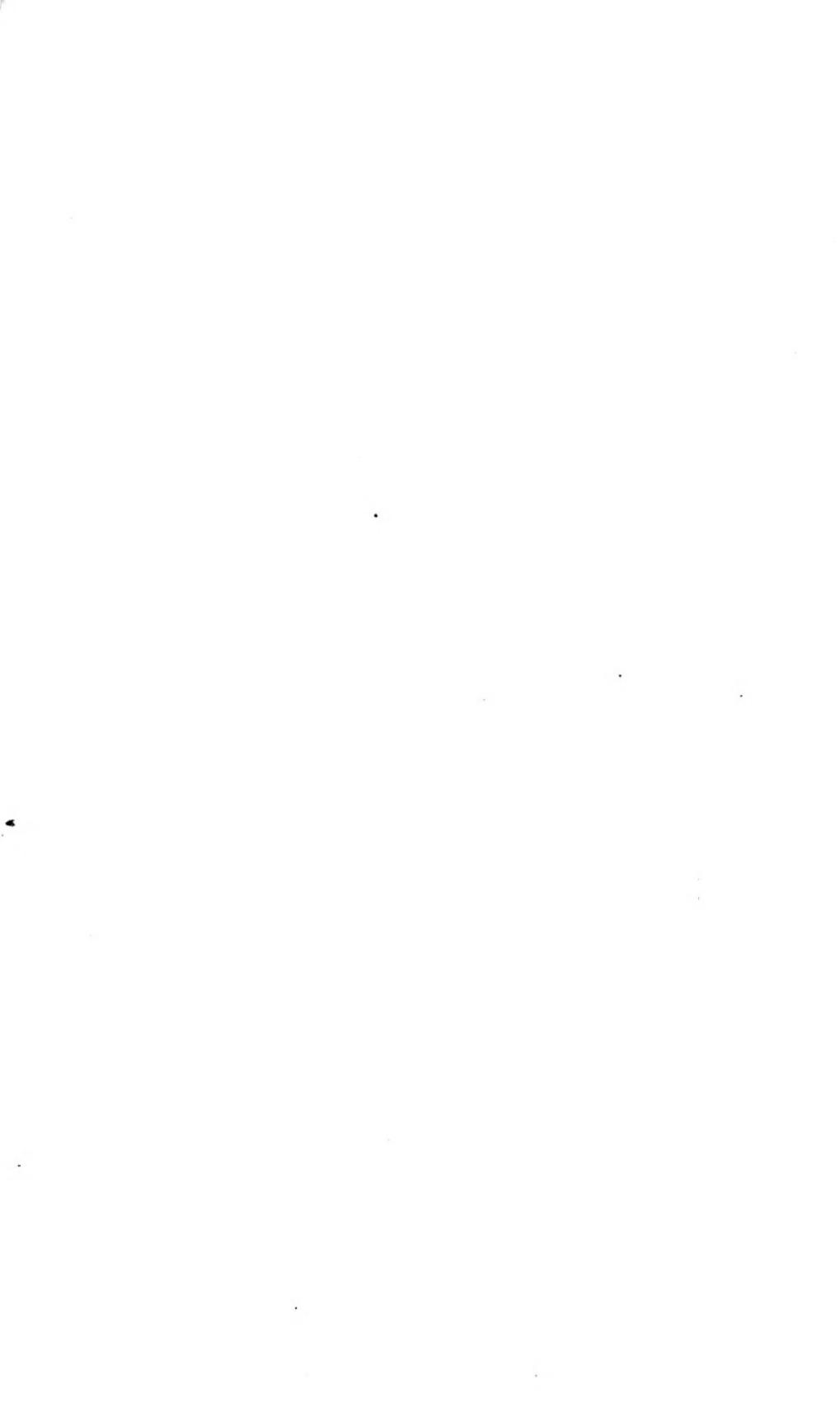
The extreme abhorrence and detestation which have been manifested for this crime throughout the world is very remarkable, and must be owing in a great degree to the high estimation in which Mr. Lincoln's character is held, and the strong approbation which has been felt for his conduct during the war. If he had been a tyrant, as the rebels have represented him, and if he had been manifesting a revengeful and cruel spirit, the effect of his removal would be very different. But it is well known that he was a very merciful, kind and conscientious man, and that he used the powers of his office in doing good to his country, without any partiality to the district to which he

belonged, and without any feelings of hatred or revenge towards any one. And it will in the end be found, that he really was doing the most good to that part of the country that rebelled against him; and that while he was acting from love towards them, they were acting from hatred towards him. And it was permitted by the Divine Providence that they should be successful; it was permitted that they should do to him what seemed to them to be the greatest possible injury; that is, to kill him, and put an end to all his operations among men.

The ways of Providence, in permitting such events, are usually called mysterious and inscrutable. Such has been the case in times past; but during the slaveholders' war, the Divine purposes have either been made remarkably manifest, or the minds of men have been opened in a remarkable manner to see them. And in no event has the Divine purpose been more manifest, than in the one which we are now considering; for we know that the general purpose which the Lord has in view, is to withdraw men from evil and lead them to good; to withdraw their minds especially, so that they may hate what is evil, and love what is good. Now by what means could this work be done most effectually? Is there any other way in which so much aversion could be produced among men, all over the world, for the evils which are manifested in slaveholders? And is there any other way in which so much affection could be produced among men, for the opposite good qualities which were manifested in Mr. Lincoln? Is there any other way that would be so effectual as that of allowing the rebels to kill him? The permission was given. The deed has been done, and the effects of it are manifest all over the world, and will be manifest forever. Now, considering the state of men, is there any other way in which so much could be done for their welfare? Are there any whose natural feelings linger in pity over the victim? Let them know that their pity is misplaced. In his own view, he is not a victim: in the view of those around him, he is not a victim; nor has he been for a moment. He is by no means a proper object of pity; but they who are more or

less guilty of the crime, are the ones to be pitied. He suffered nothing. On the contrary, what was meant for evil to him, was turned into good. He suddenly fell asleep; and when he awoke, he found himself in an exceedingly pleasant state of mind, and surrounded by delightful friends, who informed him of the happy change that had taken place in him. After having, under their guidance and instruction, become acquainted with his new situation, his ruling loves revived in him; and this brought him into open communion with those of similar loves, with whom he had been in internal and invisible communion, and with whom he had been insensibly and unconsciously sympathizing and co-operating, while in this world. From them he learns to understand many things, which were before unintelligible. He learns to understand the purposes and laws of the Divine Providence better than before. He learns that the spiritual world and the natural are close together, and that spirits and men are in internal communion, so as to influence one another, and so as to feel, think, and act together. He learns that there has for a long time been a spiritual conflict, in which evil spirits and evil men have been striving against good spirits and good men. He learns that the spiritual conflict gradually came down, and came out into a natural conflict,—into a rebellion and open war. He learns that good spirits are in favor of justice and freedom, and that they are united and co-operate with men of similar principles: also that evil spirits are in favor of injustice and slavery, and that they unite and co-operate with the men of those principles.

He finds, too, that although he has cast off the material body, and so passed from the material world into the spiritual, his principles and purposes remain the same. He is more enlightened, and his feelings are warmer, than when he was here; but this only causes him to understand and love the principles of justice and freedom better than while here, and makes him co-operate more zealously with his new companions, in bringing the kingdom of the Lord down upon earth, and causing His will to be done here, as it is in heaven.





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